

PROMPTNESS

P S

635

NO 10

Z

April 10 1900

Dear Sir

Enclosed

with this  
is a copy of  
the report  
of the  
committee

Very

Respectfully

Yours



Class PS635

Book Z9 W17

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# ↔ Aunt ↔ Hester's ✕ Dilemma.

A F A R C E

IN TWO ACTS.

— BY —

Edith H. Waldo.

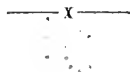
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— TO WHICH IS ADDED —

A DESCRIPTION OF THE COSTUMES—CAST OF THE CHARACTERS—ENTRANCES AND EXITS—RELATIVE POSITIONS OF THE PERFORMERS ON THE STAGE, AND THE WHOLE OF THE STAGE BUSINESS

— X —

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CLEVELAND, OHIO: ———

# AUNT HESTER'S DILEMMA.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS.

MISS HESTER BROWN,	.....	
	.....	<i>An old maid who prefers to remain one.</i>
DOROTHY BROWN,	.....	<i>Her niece.</i>
SALLY,	.....	<i>The maid.</i>
SAM GREEN,	.....	<i>Sally's lover.</i>
JUDGE SMITH,	.....	<i>Family lawyer.</i>
SILLY SMITH,	.....	<i>His son.</i>
ADAM WHITE,	{ .....	
JOE KINNY,	{ .....	<i>Neighbors.</i>
BEN PLATT,	{ .....	



TIME OF PLAYING—50 minutes.



COSTUMES—Modern.



TMP92-007584

## STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R., means Right; L., Left; R. H., Right Hand; L. H., Left Hand;  
C., Center; S. E., (2d E.) Second Entrance; U. E., Upper Entrance;  
M. D., Middle Door; F., the Flat; D. F., Door in Flat; R. C., Right  
of Center; L. C., Left of Center.

R.                      R. C.                      C.                      L. C.                      L.  
\*\* The reader is supposed to be upon the stage and                      the audience.

# Aunt Hester's Dilemma.

## ACT I.

*SCENE. An ordinary living room in Miss BROWN's village home - R. and L. E., window at back; table L., with books and newspapers on it; chairs about room - SALLY, SAM, ADAM WHITE, JOE KINNY, and BEN PLATT seated, DOROTHY and BILLY standing down R. engaged in conversation - JUDGE SMITH arranging papers on table.*

*Adam.* Old Mr. Brown went off mighty sudden like.

*Ben.* Well, Josiah was pretty well along in years, you know.

*Sally.* Wasn't it a lovely funeral?

*Sam.* Best funeral we have had this year. It was way ahead of old Higgin's funeral.

*SAM tries to take SALLY's hand, but she tosses her head and pretends to slap him.*

*Billy.* Did you receive the violets I sent, Dorothy?

*Dorothy.* Yes, they were beautiful; and I appreciated greatly the sweet note that came with them.

*Judge.* Billy, I can't find my spectacles. Have you seen them?

*Billy.* Why, you have them on, father.

*Judge.* (feels) Well, so I have, so I have.

*Joe.* The old man left considerable property. I suppose Miss Brown will come in for it all.

*Sally.* She ought to. She is his nearest relative, and has always lived with him.

*Billy* (to DOROTHY) Of course you will not go to the Polo Tournament now, so I will not enter.

*Dorothy.* Oh Billy, do not give it up on my account.

*Billy.* You know I would not enjoy playing, if you were not there to watch me.

*Enter* MISS BROWN, L. E.

*Miss Brown.* (*advancing*) Now Judge Smith, we are all assembled and ready to hear poor Uncle Josiah's will.

*Judge.* Your uncle was a very eccentric man, Miss Brown.

*Miss B.* Yes, poor dear uncle had his own ideas about many things—especially about marriage. He used to say to me, "Why don't you get married, Hester?" "Well," I would answer, "I have never seen the man yet that I'd marry. Men are so dreadful concerted—I never could abide the vain things. They always want their own way; and they all think women don't know much, while I know I am as smart as any man and a good deal smarter than some of them." Last week, just a few days before uncle died, he says to me, says he, "Hester, ain't it time you was gettin' married? 'Pears to me like you was old enough." "Uncle Josiah," says I, "I have lived single forty-two years, and I ain't found myself hankering after a husband yet. When I want to become a slave to some lazy critter as calls himself a man, I'll let you know, uncle, and you can pick one out for me." Uncle kind of chuckled and he says, "Never mind, Hester, I'll fix that." Oh, uncle was peculiar, but we all have our peculiarities, and I miss him dreadful poor dear man. (*weeps*)

*Judge.* If you are really so strongly opposed to marriage, Miss Brown, I would advise you, as a friend, to ask all the gentlemen present to retire while I read the will.

*Miss B.* Ask them to retire? Why? I do not understand what that could have to do with it.

*Judge.* You will understand when you hear the will. You really had better ask them to go, Miss Brown.

*Miss B.* Very well. Gentlemen, you will find some cider and gingerbread on the kitchen table. Go out and help yourselves.

BILLY, SAM, ADAM, JOE and BEN *file out* R. E., the latter looking curiously over their shoulders—MISS BROWN and DOROTHY *seal themselves down* L.

*Judge.* (*reads*) "Will of Josiah Brown.—Know all men by these presents, that I, Josiah Brown, being of

sound mind, do hereby will and bequeath all my property, both real and personal, to my beloved niece, Hester Brown, (Miss Brown *smiles at* DOROTHY) on condition that she accepts the first proposal of marriage made her, (Miss BROWN *sits up in horrified astonishment*) for I am determined that no old maid shall enjoy by herself the \$100,000 I have been so long in accumulating. In case the aforesaid Hester Brown should fail to comply with this condition, my property shall revert to my second cousin, Albert Brown. (Miss BROWN *paces stage in fury*, DOROTHY *endeavors to calm her*, while SALLY *giggles behind her handkerchief*) This is my last will and testament, in witness whereof I have set my hand and seal this 31st. day of August, in the year of our Lord 1900."

Miss B. What! It can't be true! Do you mean to tell me that I have to accept the first person that asks me, whether I like them or not? Why, it is outrageous? I won't endure it! I never heard of such a thing! That is just like uncle Josiah, he always was a cranky, disagreeable old fool, and just set on having his own way like all men. But I'll get the best of him yet. I don't have to marry anybody unless they ask me, and they shan't ask me. They shall not have a chance to propose to me. Dorothy, you go at once and discharge the gardener and the hire man, and you can hang a sign on the gate, "No men allowed." After this if you see any unmarried man coming to the house, just order him off the place. And Sally, you just tell Sam Green to keep away, he will be proposin' to me first thing. Oh, uncle Josiah, I will get the best of you yet! (*Exit L. E., angrily*)

Judge. I am sorry your aunt is so perturbed over this matter. Josiah Brown was certainly a very eccentric man. Good afternoon, Miss Dorothy. (*Exit R. E.*)

Sally. Well, if she thinks Sam Green would propose to her she is mightily mistaken. Why, he would not look at her nor her old money. Order him off the place indeed! I will tell him to come and see me next Saturday, when she goes to the Flower Mission. She nee in't think everybody's sweetheart is in love with her. I know Sam Green would rather have me than any \$100,000.

Dorothy. I suppose she will not let Billy come to see me any more. I wish uncle had not made that will. (*rap heard on door R.*) Come in.

*Enter ADAM WHITE, R. E.*

*Adam.* Is Miss Brown here?

*Sally.* No, she isn't. What do you want to see her for?

*Adam.* Just a little matter of business, Sally. Is it true that Miss Brown has to marry the first man that asks her?

*Sally.* Yes, it's true, more's the pity—but you ain't thinking of asking her, are you?

*Adam.* Well, I thought as how I might.

*Dorothy.* Such impertinance!

*Sally.* Well, Adam White, I am surprised! And your wife hasn't been dead three weeks yet! Ain't you ashamed of yourself?

*Dorothy.* Mr. White, you may go at once, I am sure my aunt does not care to see you.

*Adam.* How do you know, Miss Dorothy? I ain't such a bad figure of a man.

*Sally.* Figure of a beer bottle, you mean! Everybody knows as how Baily's saloon would not be able to keep going if it wasn't for your patronage.

*Adam.* I pity Sam Green when he gets a spit-fire like you, Sally. But I can't miss my chance for that \$100,000.

*Enter MISS BROWN, L. E.*

*Dorothy.* Please leave the house at once, Mr. White.

*Adam.* (on his knees) Oh, Miss Brown, will you —

*Miss B.* (screams) Stop, stop! Dorothy, Sally, stop him! Stop him! Put him out!

(covers her ears and rushes out L. E.)

*Adam.* (rises) Well, better luck next time. I'll have to say it quicker.

*Sally.* You will never get another chance if I can help it.

(Exit ADAM, R. E.)

*Dorothy.* Dear me! This is dreadful!

*Sally.* I never see such impudence!

*Dorothy.* How do you suppose he learned about the will?

*Sally.* Either Judge Smith told, or he listened at the key hole. (rap heard on door R.) Who is it?

*Enter JOE KINNY, R. E.*

*Joe.* You ought to know my knock, Sally.

*Sally.* What do you want, Joe Kinny?



*Joe.* I want to see Miss Brown very particular.

*Sally.* Well, she is very particular herself, so I don't think she will see you.

*Joe.* Please run along, Sally, and tell her that Mr. Kinny is here and wants to see her on very important business.

*Dorothy.* If your "very important business" has anything to do with the marriage clause of my uncle's will, you need not wait, Mr. Kinny.

*Joe.* Oh, I don't mind waiting, Miss Dorothy.

*Sally.* Why Joe, it ain't a month since you was proposin' to me.

*Joe.* Well, seeing as Sam had the inside track, you would not have me pine away in the flower of my youth, would you, Sally?

*Sally.* Youth! The flower of your youth must be a century plant.

*Dorothy.* Sally, show Mr. Kinny out. My aunt will not receive any callers to-day.

*Enter MISS BROWN, L. E.*

*Miss B.* Has Adam White gone? (*stops on seeing JOE*) Oh—

*Joe.* Miss Brown, I don't know you very well, but I admire you very much and

*Miss B.* (*screams*) Stop, stop! Keep still! Dorothy, Sally! make him go! (*exit L. E.*)

*Joe.* She don't give a man a fair chance.

*Sally.* Well, I'll give you a fair chance to leave before I get the broom, but you will have to hurry.

*Dorothy.* Go at once, su!

*Sally.* Yes, get out of here—go!

*Joe.* Well, I'll have another try at it. (*exit R. E.*)

*Sally.* Not if I can prevent it.

*Miss B.* (*appears at L. D.*) Has he really gone?

*Dorothy.* Yes, come in.

*Enter MISS BROWN, L. E.*

*Miss B.* This is awful! What shall I do? (*sinks into a chair*) It was mean of Judge Smith to tell those men, Go, order them off the place at once, Dorothy. Sally, you take the broom, and if any one else tries to propose to me, don't let him say a word. (*rap heard on door R.*) If it

is any one that wants to propose to me, you can not come in.

*Enter BEN PLATT, R. E.*

*Ben.* (*rushes forward*) Say, Miss Brown, will you —

*Miss B.* (*rises*) Stop! Keep still! Don't you dare propose to me! Put him out!

*Sally.* (*rushes at him with broom*) Get out of here, Ben Platt! Nobody would ever marry you unless they were blind in one eye and couldn't see out of the other.

*Ben.* I let me Miss Brown —

*Miss B.* Stop this minute! Don't you dare speak again! (*exit L. E.*)

*Dorothy.* You ought to be ashamed of yourself, trying to propose to my aunt like this! (*exit BEN, R. E.*)

*Dorothy.* (*drops into a chair, while SALLY is busy about the room, dusting, etc.*) I wonder if we are to live in such a continual state of excitement? Poor aunt Hester! What will she do?

(*SAM's head appears at open window*)

*Sally.* If those men had as much brains as they have impudence, they would be like one of those "Compendiums of Universal Knowledge" the book agents sell. But if Miss Brown leaves them to me, I think I can manage them.

*Sam.* (*in loud whisper*) Sally! Sally!

*SALLY turns quickly to window, SAM moves as if to enter, but she fraudulently waves him back.*

*Dorothy.* (*turns in her chair as SAM's head disappears*) If uncle Josiah — why, what are you doing, Sally?

*Sally.* (*stops, confused*) I — oh — I was trying to kill a wasp, Miss Dorothy.

*Dorothy.* A wasp, at this season of the year?

*Sally.* Oh yes, I see them quite frequent. Wasps are what are called perennial bugs.

*Dorothy.* (*turning back again*) I never heard of a perennial bug, Sally. That is something new for the etymologist. (*SAM appears at window and beckons to SALLY, who motions him to leave*) Surely uncle Josiah never realized what trouble his will would cause us; but he was so opposed to old ma ds.

*Sally.* (*who has motioned to SAM until she has lost all patience*) Why don't you go? (*SAM disappears*)

*Dorothy.* (rises haughtily) Were you speaking to me, Sally?

*Sally.* Oh no, Miss Dorothy! It was that wasp again!

*Dorothy.* Oh, that hardy perennial!

*Sally.* Miss Hester might come back now. All the men have gone.

*Dorothy.* Yes, you may call her, Sally.

*Sally.* Please, Miss Dorothy, would you mind calling her while I finish this bit of dusting. She likes to see things tidy. (dusts)

*Dorothy.* Why certainly. (Cecil L. E.)

*Sam.* (appears at window again) The coast is clear at last.

*Enter SAM, R. E.*

What does all this mean, Sally?

*Sally.* It means that you are ordered off the place. There ain't no men to be allowed here after this.

*Sam.* Why?

*Sally.* Because they all want to propose to Miss Brown. One hundred thousand dollars doesn't grow on every bush.

*Sam.* She need not be afraid of me. I ain't collecting no antiques.

*Sally.* Well, you can come to see me next Saturday afternoon when she always goes to the Flower Mission. Until then you will have to stay away.

*Sam.* Oh, Sally, that is pretty hard. Just say the word and you can be Mrs. Green to-morrow.

*Sally.* Sam Green, that is the third time you have proposed this week. Can't you think of something new to talk about?

*Sam.* Why yes, there is a furniture sale at Harvey's, where things is goin' real cheap.

*Sally.* Oh, go long with you!

*Sam.* Well, give me a kiss then.

*Sally.* (looks off L.) Oh, here they come! Run! Hurry!

(Cecil SAM, hast ly, R. E.)

*Enter MISS BROWN and DOROTHY, L. E.*

*Miss B.* I am that nervous and unstrung! My nerves are all upset! I never thought that a vain, lazy numskull, good-for-nothing-critter like a man could disturb me like this.

*Dorothy.* Never mind, aunt Hester, they are all gone now. (*MISS BROWN sits c. SAM appears at window and beckons to SALLY, she shakes her head*) Shall I read to you, aunt Hester?

*Sam.* (*in loud whisper*) Come outside.

*Miss B.* (*turns and sees him, rises quickly*) Help! Help! A man! I saw a man at the window! Dorothy! Sally! Help!

*Dorothy.* It looked like Sam Green.

*Miss B.* I thought he would be coming soon. Close the window and pull down the blind. Dear me! This is terrible! Don't you ever let another man come near the house. How could uncle Josiah be so mean! But no man shall propose to me.

## CURTAIN.

## ACT II.

*SCENE.*—*Same as Act 1st.*—*MISS BROWN and DOROTHY seated down c.*—*Time: one week later.*

*Miss B.* Things grow worse and worse. It has been a week now since that will was read, and I have never had a minutes peace since. If I step out into the garden to take a breath of fresh air, some man pops up from behind a rose bush and tries to propose to me. Last Wednesday, you know, I answered the door-bell because I looked through the window and saw it was a woman. But when I opened the door I found it was Abe Simpson dressed in his mother's clothes. I could hardly shut the door quick enough—he began proposin' right away. And when we tried to take a little fresh air in the carriage we hired, the driver tried to ask me to marry him. I feel that sooner or later some of them will be too quick for me, and then I will either have to marry them, or forfeit that \$100,000, and I don't want to loose the money. Have you kept count, Dorothy, of the men that tried to propose to me?

*Dorothy.* There have been thirty-seven, aunt Hester.

*Miss B.* Thirty-seven! People can't say now that I didn't marry because I never had an offer. But you see there is no use trying against such odds as that. I might as well give up. Though if I have to marry, I want somebody of my own choosing. I want a young man. I always

liked young men best. Now, who do you consider the nicest young man in the village, Dorothy?

*Dorothy.* The nicest young man in the village, aunt Hester? Why, I think Billy Smith is.

*Miss B.* Very well, I will marry Billy Smith.

*Dorothy.* You marry Billy! (*rises*) Why aunt Hester, you are ever so much older than he is!

*Miss B.* Not so much. I don't think there is more than twenty years difference. A person is only as old as they feel, and I feel young. Besides, I think Billy always liked me because he comes to the house so often.

*Dorothy.* Y-e-s, aunt, but—

*Miss B.* Now don't say another word; I have made up my mind. You go and telephone to Billy to come up at once, and when he comes, tell him of my decision. I will send Sally to get the minister and Judge Smith, and we will be married to-day. Come with me and telephone to Billy. (*exit L. E.*)

*Dorothy.* Oh dear, I suppose I will have to, but I hope Billy won't propose to her. How will I tell him when he comes? It is not easy to act as a lover's proxy; I feel more sorry for poor John Alden now than ever before. If Billy would only do as Priscilla—Oh what am I saying! Anyway, I am sure his frequent calls were not all intended for aunt Hester. (*exit L. E.*)

*Enter SAM, R. E.*

*Sam.* I wonder where Sally is. This is the day the old lady usually goes to the Flower Mission, and Sally said I could come and see her. I'll wait; she will surely come in a minute. (*takes a newspaper from table and sits at R. front of stage*) Now to-day has got to decide it. Sally must answer "yes", or "no." Here I've been courtin' her for three years, and every time I pop the question, she always has some excuse. I am tired of living alone. I want a wife and Sally must make up her mind. I am sure she likes me, but she just naturally loves to flirt. (*reads*)

*Enter MISS BROWN and DOROTHY, L. E.*

*Miss B.* (*aside to DOROTHY*) Who is that? Why, it's Sam Green! Hush! don't let him hear you. He has come to propose to me, of course. The impudent fellow!

*Dorothy.* (*aside*) Maybe he has come to see Sally.

aunt Hester.

*Miss B. (aside)* Of course not. He wants to marry an heiress like the rest of them, but he shan't propose to me. You take the table cover and slip up behind him, then put it over his head so he can't talk and I will do the rest. (*MISS BROWN stealthily gets the broom, while DOROTHY, on tiptoe, secures the table cover, and slipping up behind SAM, covers his head with it, he gives smothered yells, and waves his hands and feet frantically in the air*

*MISS BROWN hitting him with broom—aloud*) Keep still, you bold, bad man. You shan't propose to me.

*Sam. (still kicking)* Let me go! Let me go! I don't want to propose to you!

*Miss B.* Don't let him go, Dorothy. (*hits him with broom*) Keep still, you impudent fellow!

*Sam.* I'm smothering; let me go!

*Miss B.* I don't care a mite if you do smother. It would be one man the less anyway.

*Sam. (struggling)* Help, help!

(*Miss Brown hits him with broom*)

*Dorothy.* Perhaps he will promise not to propose to you if we release him.

*Sam.* Yes, let me go!

*Miss B. (hitting him)* Keep still! I am not going to take any risks. Why don't you hold the table cover so tight that he can't talk, Dorothy?

*Sam. (in muffled voice)* I'm smothering! I'm smothering!

*Miss B. (hitting him)* Be quiet!

*Dorothy.* What shall we do with him, aunt Hester?

*Miss B.* I will get some rope and we will tie him. Then we can send for the the police. (*SAM struggles and gives inarticulate yells—Miss Brown hitting him*) You need not attempt to escape, for you can't.

*Dorothy.* How can you have him arrested, aunt Hester? There isn't any law against proposals, is there?

*Miss B.* Well, there ought to be a law against it. If I was a man I would make some laws a person could use, instead of spending all my time in the Legislature raising the taxes. (*SAM struggles and makes inarticulate sounds*)

*Miss B. (hitting him)* I told you to be quiet. Don't let him go, Dorothy.

*Enter SALLY, L. E.*

*Sally.* The minister will be here in an hour, Missis —  
(sees SAM) Why, what are you doing with Sam?

*Miss B.* He wants to propose to me and I won't let him.

*Sam.* I don't. It's a lie! Let me go!

*Sally.* Of course he don't! The very idea! You couldn't marry him if you want'd to, (DOROTHY removes table cover) I am going to marry him myself.

*Sam.* (rushes to SALLY and takes her hand) Well, I am mighty glad to hear it; you have kept me waiting long enough.

*Miss B.* That's a smart way to get out of it. But, seeing as it was a man, I guess a thrashing more or less don't come amiss.

*Dorothy.* (looking out of the window) Here comes Billy

*Miss B.* We will go and leave you to tell him.

*Exit MISS BROWN, SAM and SALLY, L. E.—the two last hand in hand.*

*Dorothy.* Oh dear, I wish I had told aunt Hester somebody else was the nicest young man in the village. How shall I tell him that aunt Hester has decided to marry him?

*Enter BILLY, R. E.*

*Billy.* (rushes to DOROTHY and takes her hand) How are you, Dorothy? I came as soon as I received your message.

*Dorothy.* I am very sorry—I mean very glad. Sit down in that chair, Billy.

*DOROTHY seats herself and points to chair some little distance away.*

*Billy.* Yes, but I'll move it closer.

*Dorothy.* No, leave it where it is. Dreadful weather we are having, is it not?

*Billy.* Why, I thought it was very pleasant.

*Dorothy.* Yes, I mean pleasant. Billy, I have something very important to say to you.

*Billy.* What is it?

*Dorothy.* It—aunt Hester—would you—did you notice our daffodils were in bloom, Billy?

*Billy.* Yes. Was that the important something you were going to tell me?

*Dorothy.* No; but it is very early for them is it not?

*Billy.* I don't know much about daffodils; but if you are in trouble, Dorothy, and I could aid you in anyway, do not hesitate to ask me.

*Dorothy.* Oh no, it is not that. (*much embarrassed*) But—er—how do you like our family, Billy?

*Billy.* Why, very much.

*Dorothy.* How would you like to belong to it—that is, by marriage?

*Billy.* (*aside*) Bless her heart! She knows that I am in love with her, but has seen that I am diffident, so she is giving me a little encouragement. (*aloud, moves chair a little closer*) I would like nothing better.

*Dorothy.* Aunt Hester likes you very much.

*Billy.* I am glad she does; I was always afraid she would oppose it. (*moves chair closer*)

*Dorothy.* You could live here with us.

*Billy.* I don't care where we live; anywhere that suits you. (*moves chair closer*)

*Dorothy.* I have nothing to say, but aunt Hester prefers that plan.

*Billy.* Yes, I suppose we will have to please her.

(*moves chair closer*)

*Dorothy.* Then I can call you uncle Billy.

*Billy.* Uncle Billy! Uncle Billy! (*rises*) What do you mean?

*Dorothy.* Why, if you marry my aunt, you will be my uncle, won't you? (*rises*)

*Billy.* Marry your aunt! Is that what you meant? I did not understand. Did you think for a minute that I would marry your aunt for any \$100,000? Why, the girl I love is worth a million dollars.

(*takes DOROTHY in his arms*)

*Enter JUDGE SMITH, R. E.*

*Judge.* What are you two talking about?

*DOROTHY and BILLY spring hastily apart, looking confused.*

*Dorothy.* Aunt Hester has decided that she will have to marry somebody, and she has chosen Billy, but he objects.

*Judge.* Objects? Surely you did not object, Billy?

*Billy.* Indeed I did. She can decide on me if she



wants to, but I have decided on somebody else.

*Judge.* Well, you will have to reconsider your decision, my son. You can't refuse an heiress with \$100,000. Why, it is the opportunity of your life.

*Billy.* What do I care about her old money? I won't marry her.

*Judge.* Yes, you will! As your father I command you to do so. We could pay all our debts and live in comfort the rest of our lives.

*Billy.* I don't care. I won't marry an old maid twenty years older than I am, especially when I am in love with somebody else.

*Judge.* I will not hear any more nonsense like that. You do as I say. (*looks off L.*) Here she comes; now you march up and propose to her like an obedient son.

JUDGE *draws BILLY to one side and talks to him in pantomime, shaking his fist in his face.*

*Enter MISS BROWN, SALLY and SAM, L. E.*

*Miss B.* Have you told Billy, Dorothy?

*Dorothy.* Yes.

*Miss B.* Then everything has been arranged. The minister will be here in half an hour. Of course Billy must propose to me and I am ready to hear his declaration.

MISS BROWN *smiles encouragingly at BILLY, whose father pushes him forward.*

*Billy.* Miss Brown, before these witnesses, I solemnly ask you for the hand and heart of — (*he pauses and MISS BROWN extends her hand*) of your niece, Dorothy Brown.

BILLY *goes to DOROTHY and takes her hand, MISS BROWN drops into a chair.*

*Dorothy.* Oh Billy, this is so sudden!

*Judge.* Billy, you rascal, how dare you? What do you mean?

*Sam.* (*draws the JUDGE to one side, aside to him*) If you are so anxious to have Miss Brown in the family, why don't you marry her yourself, Judge? You are a widower.

*Judge.* By jove! I never thought of it! The very thing! (*approaches MISS BROWN and takes seat beside her*) I am sorry to observe that my son has such poor taste, but the youth of this generation are sadly lacking in the qualities of sense and discernment. I assure you that

men of mature years know how to appreciate a charming and beautiful woman. (*Miss BROWN smiles and arranges her hair*) How rare indeed, and how precious is a woman like yourself, Miss Brown, who differs from the many light and frivolous members of your sex. A woman to whom everyone must concede a superior mind and most wonderful firmness of character.

*Miss B.* I suppose you are right, Judge Smith. No one could call me a "clinging vine."

*Judge.* Far from it, I assure you! Fortunate indeed would be the man who could possess such a wise helpmate and companion as yourself. Often have I sat by my lonely hearthstone and thought how pleasant life would be with a charming and intelligent wife, like the one lady in the village, whose aversion to my sex rendered my suit wellnigh hopeless. But under the existing circumstances, I venture now to offer you a life long devotion, and lay my heart and fortune at your feet.

*Miss B.* Dear me, this is so sudden!

*Billy.* (*to DOROTHY*) Listen to the governor. I did not know he could be so romantic.

*Miss B.* (*gives JUDGE SMITH her hand*) But I always liked you better than Billy anyway.

*Dorothy.* Won't it be nice to have aunt Hester for a step-mother-in-law?

*Billy.* I am sure I would rather have her for a step-mother than a fiancée.

*Sam.* (*leading SALLY forward*) Since the minister is coming, can't we make it a triple wedding? We don't want to be left out, do we Sally?

*Sally.* Not much!

*Miss B.* (*stepping forward with the JUDGE*) Yes, we will have a triple wedding. It will be a joyous occasion, for we all have the one we wanted. Wouldn't uncle Josiah be tickled to think he got his own way after all--just like a man--the vain critters! (*smiles at the JUDGE*)

*Sally.* (*aside to SAM*) I always thought Miss Brown wasn't so set against men as she pretended.

**TABLEAU.** MISS BROWN and JUDGE SMITH R., SALLY and SAM C., DOROTHY and BILLY L., thus forming a semi-circle.

**CURTAIN.**

THE END.





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